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31 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Chairman, Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

SUBJECT : Comments on Draft Memorandum from Henry Kissinger on Civil Use of Classified Reconnaissance Systems, Technologies, and Products

1. Action Requested: Dave Elliott, NSC Staff, has forwarded for review and comment the attached draft of a memorandum to be signed by Henry Kissinger which would update and regularize civil agency handling and uses of classified satellite photography acquired over the U.S. The memorandum, among other things, calls for the DCI to form a civil applications subcommittee to COMIREX and to have a representative on an existing interagency committee dealing with earth resources survey activity. Paragraph 8., below, recommends that you concur in the substance of the proposed memorandum.

2. Background: As you may know, for some years civil agencies such as U.S. Geological Survey (USGS/Interior) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA/Commerce) have had relatively small programs to take advantage of classified satellite photography acquired over the U.S. With the exception of the USGS, for which there is a formal USIB-approved requirement, the needs of civil agencies have generally been met as by-products of satellite engineering operations over the U.S. or on an ad hoc basis as circumstances permitted. As the

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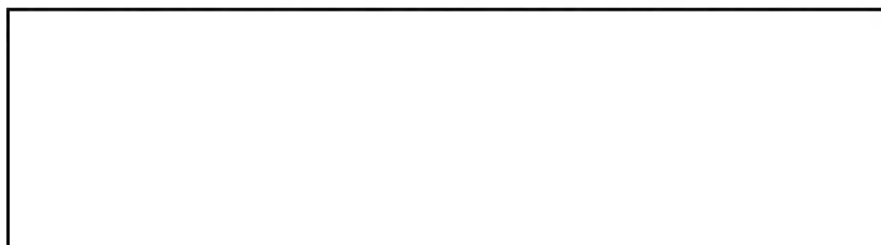
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attached draft memorandum indicates, the instrumentality for consolidating and channeling these civil agency requests in the past has been the ARGO Steering Committee, which is now defunct.

3. A number of activities have taken place during the last year or so which have expanded the interests of civil agencies in the potential application of satellite photography to their problems.



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b. The initial acquisition of the lower quality, but unclassified, imagery from NASA's Earth Resources Technology Satellite (ERTS), and more recently SKYLAB, have heightened interest in the general application of satellite photography of the earth.

c. A Federal Mapping Task Force has recently completed a government-wide survey with the conclusion that satellite photography could be used to advantage in a number of civil map making activities.

All photography acquired by the classified satellite systems is handled within the TALENT-KEYHOLE Control System and is utilized in special facilities which have been established for these purposes.

4. The specific proposals contained in the attached draft are the result of extensive discussions which Dave Elliott has had with personnel in the agencies involved and in consideration of various options. He believes the proposal represents the best balance obtainable among all factors. The memorandum itself is relatively self-explanatory.

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5. The formation of a civil applications subcommittee attached to COMIREX, as proposed in the third paragraph of the draft, is feasible and would be a relatively straightforward means of handling civil agency requirements. Such a subcommittee would operate similar to present arrangements for defense mapping and charting requirements; that is, be an independent instrumentality for receiving, evaluating, consolidating, and prioritizing requirements in its field and transmitting these to COMIREX for inclusion and consolidation with all of the other tasks levied on the classified systems.

6. If the subcommittee proposal is implemented, care would be taken in drawing up its charter to assure that it is clear that neither the Director of Central Intelligence, nor the Chairman of COMIREX acting for him, has any role to play in determining civil applications, as such, and that the function of the subcommittee is to act as an interface between the civil and intelligence areas in channeling requests for data.

7. Staff Position: I believe that the attached proposal represents a feasible approach at this time to organizing and channeling civil agency actions in this area. I have discussed and reviewed the draft memorandum with Ed Proctor, Don Steininger, and Lew Allen who concur in it.

8. Recommendation: If you concur, I recommend that you authorize me to send a note to Dave Elliott indicating that this draft has been reviewed within the Agency, and with you, and that it appears substantively acceptable in its present form.

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APPROVED: _____

DISAPPROVED: _____

Attachment

Draft Memorandum "Civil Use of Classified
Reconnaissance Systems, Technologies,
and Products"

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary of the Interior
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Commerce
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Director, Office of Management and Budget
Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space
Administration

FROM:

Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT:

Civil Use of Classified Reconnaissance
Systems, Technologies, and Products

The ARGO program was initiated in 1967 by the President's Science Adviser for the purpose of testing, on a limited basis, the utility of classified reconnaissance products as a tool in earth resource assessment. The results of the study were sufficiently encouraging that an interagency ARGO Steering Committee was established to facilitate expanded civil use of these classified data and systems, and in the succeeding period a number of projects were successfully carried out.

Experience has shown, however, that if these concepts are to be put into action on a considerably broader and more operational basis, a routine mechanism, not available now via ARGO, is required to receive, evaluate, and satisfy requests for new data. The present ARGO structure is also obsolescent with the regard to membership, and with the advent of the Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Earth Resource Survey Program (ICCERSP), the necessity of direct Executive Office involvement is no longer evident.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/XGDS/BY AUTH HENRY A. KISSINGER~~

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To move the concepts of ARGO toward greater realization and to update the organizational structure three actions are being taken.

-- The ARGO Steering Committee is abolished.

-- The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) will form a civil applications subcommittee to the Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation, which will receive, evaluate, consolidate, prioritize, and transmit to COMIREX requests for data, and will act as the interface with the civil user community in obtaining standardized requests and reaching compromises between requests and capabilities. The subcommittee will be chaired by the representative of the Department of the Interior, and will consist of representatives of the Departments of Agriculture, and Commerce, ^{and} the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The ~~chairman~~ ^{chairman} of COMIREX and the DCI representative to the Executive Committee of ICCERSP will serve ex officio.

-- The Director of the Office of Management and Budget is requested to charge the Executive Committee of ICCERSP with the responsibility ~~to~~ ^{viz-a-viz the Committee member agencies to} stimulate, facilitate, and evaluate ~~among the Committee member agencies~~ ^{coordinate the incorporation of} the exploitation of remote sensing by classified systems, to ~~employ as feasible~~ ^{of} classified reconnaissance technology in performance of the ERS function, and to report annually, in a classified annex to the annual ERS report, as to the status, progress, problems, and recommendations in obtaining and integrating classified data into the U.S. ERS program. The Executive Committee will be supplemented with a representative of the DCI, for the purposes of liaison and facilitating acquisition of clearances for member agency personnel.